

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 DODE-00

CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 AID-20 MC-02 ACDA-19 L-03

DRC-01 IGA-02 /117 W

----- 025376

R 172152Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9449

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 4226

LIMA FOR SECRETARY CALLAWAY; DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS DOD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINS, MASS

SUBJECT: NEW DEFENSE MINISTER COMPLAINS RE US ARMS DELIVERIES

REF: STATE 150955

1. SUMMARY: DEFENSE MINISTER BONILLA EXPRESSES HOPE FOR EXPANDED MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM USG. NOTES ANOMALY INHERENT IN USG HAVING REACTED MORE RESPONSIVELY TO CHILEAN ARMS REQUESTS WHEN ALLENDE IN OFFICE THAN SINCE, AND DEPLORES CONTINUING ARMS IMBALANCE VIS-A-VIS PERU. ESPECIALLY CONCERNED RE TOW AND M-60 TANK DELIVERIES. AMBASSADOR EXPLAINS PROBLEMS PRESENTED FOR US, REFERRING INTER ALIA TO SECTION 32 OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCOMPANIED BY ARMA, I PAID COURESY CALL ON GENERAL OSCAR BONILLA BRADAVONIC, WHO LAST WEEK MOVED OVER TO DEFENSE FROM POST OF INTERIOR MINISTER IN GENERAL CABINET RESHUFFLE.

3. AFTER AMENITIES, BONILLA LAUNCHED INTO A MILD PHILIPPIC WITH REGARD TO US MILITARY AID TO CHILE. BURDEN OF HIS COMPLAINT WAS THAT PERU HAD ACQUIRED SOME 200 SOVIET TANKS AND OTHER MODERN MATERIEL, WHILE CHILE WAS FINDING IT MOST
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DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN EVEN FIFTEEN M-60 TANKS, AND HAD BEEN

TOLD TOW ANTI-TANK DEVICE COULD NOT BE MADE AVAILABLE BECAUSE IT WAS A SOPHISTICATED WEAPON. CHILEANS WERE DEEPLY CONCERNED, HE SAID, OVER GREAT IMBALANCE BETWEEN PERUVIAN AND CHILEAN ARMS INVENTORIES.

4. BONILLA POINTED OUT THAT UNDER MARXIST REGIME OF EX-PRESIDENT ALLENDE SOVIETS HAD BEEN PREPARED TO SEND TO CHILE THE SAME TYPE OF TANKS PERU FINALLY OBTAINED, ON EXTREMELY ADVANTAGEOUS TERMS. AT THAT TIME, CHILEAN ARMED FORCES HAD EVADED AND DELAYED ALLENDE'S EFFORTS TO MOVE FORWARD WITH A SOVIET ARMS PURCHASE. ODAY, THE VERY WEAPONS US HAD AGREED TO SUPPLY CHILEANS DURING THE ALLENDE PERIOD WERE APPARENTLY BEING WITHHELD OR DELIVERIES POSTPONED. COULD IT POSSIBLY BE SAID THAT USG WAS MORE FAVORABLE TO A MARXIST THAN AN ANTI-MARXIST REGIME? AND IN THESE SAME IDEOLOGICAL TERMS, WAS IT FAIR TO CONSIDER CHILEAN AND PERUVIAN REQUESTS FOR US ARMS ON A MORE OR LESS EVEN BASIS?

5. I TOOK EXCEPTION TO BONILLA'S APPROACH AS BEING VASTLY OVERSIMPLIFIED. SAID BONILLA MUST REMEMBER TWO ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF PRESENT SITUATION. FIRST, IT WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN MILITARY ASSISTANCE FUNDS FROM US CONGRESS AND PEOPLE, AND WHAT THERE WAS HAD TO BE SPREAD AMONG A LARGE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES. MOREOVER, CERTAIN WEAPONS SUCH AS M-60 TANKS WERE IN SHORT SUPPLY IN OUR OWN FORCES (FOR EXAMPLE, BECAUSE OF DIVERSIONS DURING THE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR) AND SURELY CHILEANS COULD NOT EXPECT US TO GIVE LOWER PRIORITY TO REBUILDING OUR OWN INVENTORIES THAN TO NEEDS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, FRIENDLY THOUGH THEY ARE.

6. SECOND POINT, I CONTINUED, WAS THAT WHILE PEOPLE OF US OF COURSE PREFER ANTI-MARXIST TO MARXIST REGIMES, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY THEY LOOK AT PROBLEM IN MUCH BROADER TERMS. THEY PREFER DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS TO DICTATORSHIPS OR OTHER AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES, AND THIS INEVITABLY INFLUENCES MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND ORGANS OF PUBLIC OPINION. HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS ARE VERY REAL FACTOR IN CHILE, AND THERE IS NO DOUBT THEY INCREASE OUR DIFFICULTIES IN MEETING CHILEAN NEEDS.

7. I TOOK OCCASION AT THIS POINT TO CARRY OUT INSTRUCTION RE
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FAA SECTION 32 (POLITICAL PRISONERS) CONTAINED IN STATE 150955. READ OUT TEXT OF SECTION 32, EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS NOT A MANDATORY REQUIREMENT, BUT ENLARGED UPON ITS RELEVANCE TO ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF AID RECIPIENTS.

8. BONILLA TOOK RESPONSE AMICABLY. ASKED IF IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR CHILEANS TO MANUFACTURE TWO IN THEIR OWN PLANTS. (TOW SEEMED TO BE HIS PRINCIPAL IMMEDIATE PREOCCUPATION.)

ARMA COMMENTED THAT IT WAS A COMPLEX WEAPON, AND EVEN IF THIS WERE TECHNICALLY POSSIBLE THERE WOULD BE QUESTIONS RE PATENTS AND ROYALTY RIGHTS OF US MANUFACTURERS.

9. COMMENT: I HAVE HEARD THIS RATHER TRUCULENT NOTE REGARDING US MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM CHILEAN OFFICIALS BEFORE, EVEN FROM GENERAL PINOCHET. IT IS A NATURAL REACTION OF BLUNT MILITARY MEN WHO LACK THE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY AND BUREAUCRATIC EXPERIENCE TO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM FROM OUR ANGLE. PRESENTATION IS ALWAYS GOOD-NATURED. I THINK IT IS USEFUL TO REPLY WITH EQUAL FRANKNESS.

10. ARMY SECRETARY CALLAWAY WILL NO DOUBT BE HIT WITH SAME STORY DURING HIS OFFICIAL MEETINGS NEXT WEEK. WE WILL GIVE HIM UPDATED BRIEFING ON HIS ARRIVAL IN SANTIAGO.

11. OTHER ASPECTS OF CONVERSATION REPORTED SEPTEL.
POPPER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS, ARMS, MILITARY PROCUREMENT, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, POLITICAL PRISONERS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SANTIA04226
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740192-0983
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740741/aaaabiyl.tel
Line Count: 133
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 150955
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <25 MAR 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW DEFENSE MINISTER COMPLAINS RE US ARMS DELIVERIES
TAGS: PINS, MASS, EAID, CI, US, (BONILLA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005